

25X1A

Air Force Pilot Dies Over Cuba; Red Missiles Score on U-2 Again?

The high-flying U-2 spy plane has figured in another mystery, this one growing out of the Cuba crisis and the death of an Air Force pilot.

The flier, 35-year-old Maj. Rudolf Anderson, Jr., of Greenville, S.C., apparently was shot down by a Russian anti-aircraft missile.



Major Anderson

He was piloting a U-2 on a reconnaissance flight over Cuba. But for undisclosed reasons, the Government last week would only say that Major Anderson was a casualty—the only one of the Cuban crisis—and that United Nations Secretary General U Thant had obtained an agreement from Cuba to return his

body. Two pieces of evidence made it almost certain that Major Anderson was piloting a U-2, the same type of aircraft Francis Gary Powers was flying when he was mysteriously downed over Russia two years ago. Gen. Thomas Powers, commander of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), issued a posthumous citation to Major Anderson for reconnaissance work. The principal reconnaissance aircraft used by SAC is the U-2. Earlier in the week, Major Anderson's father stated his son was a U-2 pilot.

Close-Mouthed on Details

Government reluctance to discuss details of the pilot's death apparently stems from a desire to do nothing that might give Cubans or Russians an excuse to stop dismantling Soviet missile sites in Cuba.

Piling assumption on assumption indi-

cates that it was a modern anti-aircraft missile that downed Major Anderson. If he was in a U-2 at an operational altitude of 70,000-80,000 feet, it would take an up-to-date missile to reach him. Such a missile is the Russian SA-2 which has been spotted in Cuba. It has an estimated range of over 100,000 feet, and it seeks out the heat of an airplane's exhaust.

A direct hit would kill the pilot or so cripple a plane that it could not take advantage of its great altitude for a powerless glide far out to sea. Even a near miss could throw the relatively unstable U-2 out of control. Some experts believe it was an SA-2 near miss that crippled Mr. Powers' U-2.

The Department's Contention

Defense Department spokesmen contend they don't know the details of Major Anderson's death. The disclosure that he was missing, however, came within hours after President Kennedy had publicly rejected Premier Khrushchev's proposal for dismantling of American missile bases in Turkey in return for withdrawal of Soviet missiles and launchers in Cuba. The President had promptly proclaimed that the United States would continue aerial surveillance of Cuba and would return any fire aimed at our planes.

In the midst of speculation about details of Major Anderson's death, a Government source disclosed that Mr. Powers had resigned from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on Oct. 6.

The Russians sentenced Mr. Powers to 10 years for spying. But he was freed last February in exchange for Russian spy Rudolf Abel, who was serving a 30-year espionage sentence in this country.

Mr. Powers, 33, went to work in CIA headquarters near Washington after his return. He quit the agency, said one source, because "his work was finished."